

VINDICATED!

The Citizens of Jefferson County, Irrespective of Party, do Honor to the Chosen Leader of The People.

A grand mass meeting of the citizens of Jefferson county was held at Oskaloosa, on the evening of the 12d inst., to give expression to the indignation of the people of the county that has so many times honored Mr. Willits, at the malicious attacks of his political enemies upon his character. Notwithstanding but a single day's notice was given of the meeting, every part of the county was largely represented, and Critchfield's large opera house was literally packed, and one of the significant features of the meeting was that it was composed entirely of voters. The announcement of the meeting was public, the notice being circulated by hand-bill, so that had there been any strength or character behind the corrupt ring that has put the vile slanders against our candidate for governor in circulation, there was ample opportunity for it to show itself on this occasion.

Captain L. H. Gest, county lecturer of the Jefferson County Alliance, was elected chairman and B. R. Wilson, B. F. Shane and N. H. Harman, secretaries.

Taking the chair, Captain Gest said:

Until a few moments ago I had no idea that my name would be suggested as chairman of this meeting, and I must say that of all the acts of my life I esteem it a privilege and pleasure to have the opportunity of presiding over this magnificent body of earnest and intelligent men called together to investigate the charges against the Hon. J. F. Willits, a resident of our county and candidate of the People's party for governor of Kansas.

Captain Gest said that he had been acquainted with Mr. Willits for nearly twenty years, during which time he had been frequently honored by the people and had always been intimately identified with every interest of the masses. He personally knew him to be the soul of honor, and he knew him to be esteemed and respected by the good people of the county on the one hand, and despised by the ring politicians on the other. Captain Gest hastily sketched the character of these ring politicians, paying his respects especially to Captain J. B. Johnson and the editor of the Oskaloosa Independent, some of whose speculative schemes Mr. Willits had in years past seriously interfered with, thereby incurring the bitter hatred which underlies the malicious assaults upon his character at the present time.

Space will not permit a full report of the speeches made. We can only find room for a very brief synopsis.

The following citizens were appointed a committee to report resolutions expressing the sentiment of the people respecting the vile slanders against Mr. Willits: A. G. Patrick, Oskaloosa; Wm. Davis, of Union; E. W. Casebeer, of Jefferson; N. H. Harman, of Delaware; A. McKewen, of Osawatie; J. M. Dooley, of Rock Creek; A. C. Hurd, of Caw; Hon. Valorous Brown, of Kentucky; W. C. Fowler, of Fairview; J. Miller, of Norton, and A. D. Judy, of Kaw. Hon. Valorous Brown, a fellow member with Mr. Willits in the Kansas legislature of 1873, was called upon and made a splendid speech in vindication of Mr. Willits. His remarks were unfortunately not reported.

Terry Critchfield, a political opponent, said:

I did not come here to talk. When I read the call for this mass meeting for the purpose of investigating the charges recently made respecting the standing and integrity of Mr. Willits, the people's candidate for governor, I said that was the proper thing to do. I see here many prominent and influential citizens and neighbors of Mr. Willits, and I desire you to make a thorough investigation of his public acts, and if you please of his every private act during his residence of twenty-seven years in this county, and then, by resolutions, speak to the voters of the great state of Kansas. I have been selling goods and banking in this place for the last twenty-five years, and I have had dealings with Mr. Willits amounting to many thousands of dollars, and he has always proven himself to be reliable and honest. His standing in this community has always been good. None dare to say anything to the contrary except from an Ingalls political standpoint. The Republican party twice elected him to the legislature, but to-day they "loose the dogs of war," because he has strayed from the political fold. If he would only return there would be "more rejoicing than over the ninety and nine that went not astray." * * * * *

The charges against Mr. Willits are before you to-day. It is to investigate these that you have left your farms and come up here on this occasion. The voters of the state are awaiting your verdict. Weigh all the evidence as sworn jurors. Consider the records and facts, and give everything an impartial hearing, not as demagogues and politicians, but as non-partisan citizens; then send your verdict forth to the voters of Kansas in tones of thunder denouncing these foul and infamous slanders, pronouncing to the world J. F. Willits vindicated—J. F. Willits, the rail splitter—the Abraham Lincoln of Kansas.

B. R. Wilson made a lengthy speech in which he designated the charges published in the Independent and reproduced by the Topeka Capital and the Republican press of the state, as an irresponsible communication of a correspondent to an insignificant country newspaper, signed by a star. He said that Mr. Roberts had never given the charges editorial endorsement except by publication. He characterized the communication as a one-sided affair, entirely omitting the answer of the defendant. He said the meanest man that ever stole a horse or a pocketbook was allowed to be heard in defense; but in this instance the records of but one side were given to the people.

Mr. Wilson further said:

This shameful attack by a portion of the Republican party (for I would blush for my kind to include any large portion of that party in such business) upon a citizen whom the Republicans of this county have endorsed and honored since the facts of his life have been known prove that Senator Ingalls spoke from a personal and party standpoint when he said that the "purification of politics is an iridescent dream."

Mr. Wilson said that he was prompted by the instinct of a soldier as well as a citizen in his participation in this meeting for the vindication of an honored fellow citizen.

A. G. Patrick also made a lengthy and pointed speech. We regret very much that our limited space forbids its publication in full. He said:

The vindictive and scurrilous attack upon Mr. Willits emanated from the office of the Oskaloosa Independent, whose proprietor and editor is a fitting subject to make a drive at corruption, for according to an old saying "it takes a thief to catch a thief," and Roberts' olfactory organs are well adapted to the situation. In his whole physiognomy is delineated a character well calculated to hunt up misdeeds of his neighbors. He is devoid of rectitude and so steeped in guilt he in reverie could well exclaim like Richard III:

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues and every tongue brings in a several tale, and every tale condemns me as a villain."

Mr. Patrick then proceeds to show Mr. Roberts' attempted steal from the county treasury and to ventilate his true character as known to the people of Jefferson county. He said:

While bullets flew thick and whistled something besides Yanke Doodle among the boys in blue, this sanctified saint took advantage of a poor absent soldier, fighting for his country, by getting a tax certificate on his property and jay-hawking between two days, when rogues do choose to roam, a house worth \$400, which can probably be seen to-day in the shape of an addition to his present family residence.

This is the sanctimonious, hypocritical villain who now seeks to blacken the character of a man whom our citizens have delighted to honor solely because he has been made the candidate for governor by the people's convention and is likely to defeat the grand old party.

Mr. W. C. Fowler, an old veteran, has held the office of register of deeds, and is one of Jefferson county's most respected citizens. He has this to say:

I have lived a close neighbor of Hon. J. F. Willits from October, 1865, to December 1880. I lived within about one mile of his residence. I have had dealings with him as a neighbor and in an official capacity in various ways. I have always known him as a man of honor, firm in his convictions for the right. I know him to be a man of fine ability and as true as steel to the cause of the farmer, the producer and the laborer. I feel sure that the people will make no mistake in electing him governor of the state of Kansas.

Hon. Valorous Brown, a fellow member with Mr. Willits in the legislature of 1873, said:

I have known Mr. Willits for many years, and until his nomination for governor, I have never heard a word said against his character.

James Thornton, A. D. Judy, E. J. Doughty, A. McKeever and E. W. Casebeer also gave testimony. Mr. Reckard and Wm. Means, people's candidates for the legislature from the Fourth and Fifth districts, spoke in condemnation of the charges. They said they had known Mr. Willits personally for years, and know him to be a man of integrity and honor. Mr. Means said that Mr. Willits had always helped this Lincoln family in every way in his power. He said in conclusion:

I know this to be true as gospel, and it is a burning shame that at this day anyone should charge him with mistreating the family. It is not so.

Mr. George Davis, of Union township was called for and said:

I have voted the Republican ticket for over twenty years, but I have left that party for good. I have lived in this county for twenty-five years and know that John F. Willits has been the friend of the farmer. He is certain to be your next governor.

D. W. Daniels made a statement in relation to Mrs. Annie B. Lincicum's recent visit to Topeka. He said:

Basked her to go to Topeka and make a truthful statement of her troubles with Mr. Willits. She wanted me to take her statement there at McLouth. I told her I would not do it, as it would be said that I had induced her to make the statement. Then she said she would go to Topeka and make it.

Mr. Daniels gives an account of the manner in which this woman was kidnapped and taken to the Copeland hotel in Topeka. She was there kept surrounded by Republican managers and no one was permitted to interview her except in their presence. It has already

been shown in the Advocate that she was paid \$200 by these charitable managers, and that Captain Johnson had stated in a public speech in Topeka that the original papers in the suit were in his possession. These facts do not need to be enlarged upon here.

The committee on resolutions, after a thorough consideration of the charges and the examination of many witnesses, reported as follows:

Mrs. CHAIRMAN:—Your committee upon resolutions beg leave to make the following report:

1. That the charges against Hon. J. F. Willits, a man whom the people of Jefferson county have honored and respected for the last twenty-seven years, have been trumped up in malice, and are so contemptible and insignificant as to be unworthy of a respectful thought.

2. That we have implicit faith and confidence in the honor and integrity of Hon. J. F. Willits, and believe that if elected governor of the state of Kansas, he will see that the laws are faithfully executed, and will be far from preaching prohibition at home and getting on lordly sprees when out of the state.

3. That the Oskaloosa Independent is an infamous lying sheet, run in the interest of monopoly and the ring, and so unscrupulous that we are led to believe that the editor has adopted the sentiment of Senator Ingalls, that "decadence and golden rule has no place in a political campaign."

4. That as citizens of Jefferson county and neighbors of Hon. J. F. Willits, we denounce one Capt. J. B. Johnson, a former attorney of Oskaloosa, in attempting for political purpose to besmirch the character of an old friend whom he in times past delighted to honor and support, as not only disreputable and malicious, but beneath the dignity of a true gentleman.

The resolutions were adopted unanimously. There was not a man in Jefferson county who dared to stand in the presence of that assembly at the county seat of Mr. Willits' home county and raise his voice against this report. It stands unquestioned as the unanimous sentiment of the decent, respectable citizens of the corrupt-ring politicians.

Mr. Lloyd moved that these proceedings be published in the reform papers of the state, which motion prevailed. A vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Critchfield for the use of his opera house and the meeting adjourned.

Jefferson county will be heard from on the 4th of November in tones that will not be misunderstood.

History's Warning.

The eloquent Patrick Henry said:

"We can only judge the future by the past."

Look at the past!

When Egypt went down 2 per cent. of her population owned 97 per cent. of her wealth. The people were starved to death.

When Babylon went down 2 per cent. of her population owned all her wealth. The people were starved to death.

When Persia went down 1 per cent. of her population owned the land.

When Rome went down 1,800 men owned all the known world. There are about 40,000,000 people in England, Ireland and Wales, and 100,000 people own all the United Kingdom.

For the past twenty years the United States has rapidly followed in the steps of those old nations. Here are the figures:

In 1850 the capitalists owned 27½ per cent. of the nation's wealth; in 1870 they owned 63 per cent.—Boston Progress.

SEE our premiums for club-raisers
hen go to work.